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**MOTIVATION AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: IMPLICATIONS FOR  
ASL**

**MSSE Master's Project**

Submitted to the Faculty  
Of the Master of Science Program in Secondary Education  
Of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

National Technical Institute for the Deaf  
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

By

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Student Signature

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Science

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# Abstract:

Motivation is one factor which can influence second language learning. Research on second language learning and motivation influences instructional practices. In this review classic definitions and aspects of motivation, including integrative and instrumental motivation, will be revisited. Through existing second language learning and motivation research, different instructional theories and strategies have been used and developed over time for the classroom. However, little research into motivation and learning American Sign Language (ASL) exists. Therefore, this paper will look into the research that has set out to study motivation and learning ASL. In addition, research centered on motivation and second language learning in other languages will be reviewed in order to make comparisons to learning ASL and parallel the experiences. From this review, learning and instructional strategies will be applied to ASL.

### Introduction

The potential to achieve a goal lies in motivation (Belmechri & Hummel, 1998).

Motivation is associated with behaviors which support the achievement of goals; it helps to explain why people behave as they do (Csizer & Dornyei, 2005; Masgoret & Gardner, 2002). Motivation is described as being "moved to do something," and if a person is engaged and inspired they are perceived as being motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54). A person who is motivated will apply the necessary effort and perseverance to succeed (Masgoret & Gardner, 2002).

In the field of education, Bransford, Brown, & Cocking (2000) have stated their belief that it is motivation that influences the time, energy and effort invested into learning. Motivation plays a key role in maintaining student focus, interest, behavior, and participation in class. Research suggests motivation in the classroom is positively connected to academic success (Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005).

Currently, society and academic standards have left students in a continuous struggle: they struggle to learn the necessary skills to be productive, while at the same time they must attain the test scores necessary to advance and/or graduate (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). This struggle and added pressure have resulted in a loss of motivation (Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005). With low motivation, students may idly sit by and miss valuable learning experiences. This may limit their success, and that can lead to increased frustration, and result in a loss of even more motivation.

### Motivation and Second Language Learning

In particular, language learning is impacted by motivation; Noels, Clement, & Pelletier (1999) found that successful L2 learning occurs when motivation is maintained. An L2, as defined by Oxford and Shearin (1994), is a language “learned in a location where that language is typically used as the main vehicle of everyday communication for most people” (p. 14).

### American Sign Language

In North America, American Sign Language (ASL) is gaining recognition and popularity as an L2 in educational programs (McKee & McKee, 1992). The American Sign Language Teachers Association (2007) reports, “there are approximately 250,000-500,000 ASL users in the USA and Canada. Most of them use ASL as their primary language. At least thirty-five (35) States have recognized ASL as a modern language for public schools. Hundreds of colleges/universities (at least 750) in the United States are offering ASL classes” (para. 5-6). Hence, direct contact with the Deaf community is not only possible but likely. For the purpose of this review ASL is defined as: a rule governed communication system exhibiting all features of language. ASL is the visual language of Deaf and hard-of-hearing people that developed naturally over time within the Deaf community in North America and is still in use today (Valli & Lucas, 2004).

### Motivation and Second Language Research

Related to the study of L2 learning, motivation is defined by Gardner as, “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language” (Noels, 2001, p. 108).

Fluctuations in motivation occur overtime and in response to situations and context (Dornyei, 2001). As Noels (2001) explains, students' L2 motivation can be fostered in the appropriate L2 classroom environment. Therefore, to educators, the correspondence between L2 learning and motivation becomes a subject of interest. Learning about student motivation and how it affects L2 learning can help to promote students' success. Through understanding L2 motivation, teaching strategies which help increase and maintain student motivation can be discovered, developed, and incorporated into the classroom. Furthermore, educators can help students develop their own learning strategies to increase motivation and support L2 learning. Beyond time spent in school, L2 motivation research continues to be imperative as today there are more bilinguals in the world than monolinguals (Dornyei, 1994).

Research in motivation and L2 learning does exist and some strategies to increase and maintain motivation in the classroom have been devised; however, little research devoted specifically to ASL learning and motivation exists. As a visual language, ASL requires the acquisition of special L2 learning skills such as: visual discrimination and eye contact, body language and facial expressions, and the use of space. Therefore, existing teaching and learning strategies must be studied and then tailored to be applied to ASL learning.

Existing research in motivation and L2 learning centers on social themes. Language is seen as a social organizational factor; therefore, L2 learning is believed to be a social event (Dornyei, 1994).

Understanding motivation and L2 learning begins with recognizing the different types of motivation. Motivation has been categorized mainly as intrinsic (IM) and

extrinsic (EM). IM is defined as motivation steaming from personal enjoyment and satisfaction; EM is defined as motivation steaming from external factors—attaining desired outcomes, earning rewards, appeasing others, and avoiding consequences (Ryan & Deci, 2000). IM and EM have long been a topic of research for educational purposes (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001).

Educational research into motivation has found intrinsic and extrinsic motivation both lay on a continuum: there are different concentrations of both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand, 1999). Comparatively, IM is found to be correlated with higher levels of motivation, comfort, and the desire to continue learning (Deci et al., 2001; Noels, 2001; Noels et al., 1999). What's more, IM has been positively linked to “high-quality,” life long learning and adjustment (Deci et al., 2001, p. 14). Therefore, common themes included in this literature review center on IM since they focus on the personal enjoyment and satisfaction related to and resulting from L2 learning.

#### Major Considerations/Central Themes

Central themes considered in this paper include: integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, the group dynamic and shared goals, and attitudes toward the learning situation. Attitudes toward the learning situation include: the willingness to communicate, language anxiety, autonomy, and instructional strategies. Each of the central themes will be discussed, in detail, in the following pages. From this discussion, each theme then will be applied to ASL learning in the classroom.

Within the field of motivation and L2 learning research, it is Gardner who constructed the socioeducational model of L2 acquisition (Gardner, Tremblay, &



Masgoret, 1997). This model illustrates the relationships between different L2 learning variables. The socioeducational model is comprised of: attitudes, motivation, language aptitude, and achievement. Gardner's model has been widely accepted and has served as the basis for further study. Under Gardner's model two main aspects of motivation were identified and labeled: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation (Dornyei, 1994). Integrative motivation is defined as the positive attitudes toward members of the target L2 community, and a desire to interact and emotionally identify within the target community, while acquiring their social beliefs and actions (Dornyei, 1994; Csizer & Dornyei, 2005). Integrative motivation is considered IM given that the interaction and identification with the target community contributes to personal satisfaction. Instrumental motivation is defined as the interest in potential gains through L2 learning (Dornyei, 1994); and, can be considered IM for the reason that these potential gains include interactions and involvement with the target community as well.

### Integrative Motivation

Integrative motivation has been found to be the most significant factor in L2 motivation (Gardner et al., 1997; Noels, 2001; Csizer & Dornyei, 2005). Research studies conducted by Lang, Foster, Gustina, Mowl, and Liu (1996a & 1996b) at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) focused on motivational attitudinal orientation, including integrative motivation. Integrative motivation is a central theme considered in the NTID studies (Lang et al., 1996a & 1996b). Results and conclusions based on questionnaires in these two studies do support that integrative motivation plays an important role in L2 learning. However, these results are specific to the NTID

community, the authors warn, and therefore should be considered, but not automatically applied to the general population.

In the NTID studies (1996a & 1996b), 176 hearing faculty and staff who work in an environment with both deaf students and deaf colleagues were surveyed. The purpose of this study was to examine their motivation for learning ASL. ASL acquisition in this environment is not only highly encouraged but expected (Lang et al., 1996b). In this article, *Motivational and Attitudinal Orientations in Learning American Sign Language*, the participants, hearing faculty, ventured to learn ASL in order to establish relationships with their colleagues and develop ties to the Deaf community and Deaf culture (Lang et al., 1996a). Immersion in the culture through employment allowed members of the hearing faculty to understand and appreciate the diversity within the Deaf community. The faculty indicated they believed that learning ASL offered the best opportunity in which to successfully communicate with and belong among such a diverse group of people (1996a).

In a second article, *Motivational Factors in Learning American Sign Language*, results showed faculty's motivation to learn ASL incorporated high levels of integrative motivation (Lang et al., 1996b). Faculty members sought to improve L2 skills, intending to establish deeper relationships with both students and colleagues. Specific to the context of this study, the authors suggest integrative motivation may be related more narrowly to the community within the school as opposed to the general Deaf community. Again, participants stressed their desire to better understand their co-workers, their students, and become a part of the NTID Deaf community. It is important to note that both faculty and staff at NTID are required to achieve at least an Intermediate level rating

on the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) (a tool used to rate communication skill) to secure tenure; however, this was not listed as the primary motivational factor (Lang et al., 1996a & 1996b).

Further study was conducted at NTID by MacLeod, Fischer, and Campbell (2004) to investigate the sign language learning process. Eighteen faculty members participated in semi structured interviews sharing their experiences and opinions. Securing tenure through scores on the SCPI, as noted above, is a result of the institute's communication policy. Learning sign language is a job requirement and viewed by faculty members as a "natural expectation" (MacLeod et al., 2004, p. 8). Yet, participants in this study again cited integrative motivational factors in their responses: building closer relationships with Deaf people and bonding in the NTID community (2004).

Integrative motivation was also reported as the main factor in student motivation in an earlier investigation of L2 learning and ASL (McKee & McKee, 1992). In their study of college level ASL teachers and 72 college ASL students, McKee and McKee revealed the difficulties students encountered while learning ASL. Students' motivations to learn ASL as their L2 were also reported in this study. Participants' comments reported integrative motivation to be strong as a result of pre-existing exposure to the Deaf community via a Deaf child or Deaf colleague. Similar to the NTID studies, learning ASL was a tool for socialization among the people in which they already had regular contact.

In 1996 and 1997, integrative motivation was investigated with 197 L2 students registered in a university French course (Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004). Among the target variables, integrative motivation was measured six times throughout

the year to establish if and when an increase or decrease occurred. Little change was found in integrative motivation throughout the one-year period: high levels of integrative motivation were not found to drop significantly. Students who begin an academic year with high levels of motivation and low levels of anxiety were reported to have done well in the class, therefore, maintaining their motivation and anxiety levels (Gardner et al., 2004).

Research conducted in Japan also supported the importance of integrative motivation; one study focused on Japanese students' learning English as an L2 (Uematsu, 1999). Having lived in the United States for at least two years, participants in this study showed a desire to communicate with peers and teachers in their schools as well as other people in the community. Additionally, participants believed learning English was a step toward adapting to the majority culture—the American culture—as language and culture are viewed to be intertwined (Uematsu, 1999).

Perales and Cenoz (2002) focused on individual and contextual factors associated with second language acquisition in their investigation of the Basque Country. Similar to the NTID research studies, the Perales and Cenoz (2002) study centers around one community serving as home to both majority and minority language users. Basque Country is home to adult speakers of primarily the Spanish or French language. However, exposure and interactions with the minority language group of Basque speakers is relevant, common, and continuous. Day care settings, neighbors and relatives are listed as examples of daily Basque exposure. Due to this unique situation many adults living in the Basque Country were found to be “passive bilingual,” having receptive understanding of Basque yet unable to speak it (Perales & Cenoz, 2002, p. 3). Recognizing this difference

between receptive and expressive skills, the Basque Government offers Basque in the educational system and has set up special school programs to address the language learning needs of adult learners. Living in such close proximity to their minority language counterparts, the majority language users share many of their daily activities and interactions with their language minority counterparts. They describe integrative motivation to be a significant motivational factor in their pursuit to learn Basque.

### Integrative Motivation in Learning ASL

The literature cited above illustrates that integrative motivation is the most important factor in L2 motivation and learning. Integrative motivation is the desire of the L2 student to partially or fully assimilate into the target community (regardless of if the community is an academic environment or a minority community). Integrative motivation, as reflected in the research above, is also a main factor in learning ASL.

For students learning ASL, integrative motivation can be maintained and increased by networking and socializing within the Deaf community. This socialization among the Deaf community will not only maintain, but enhance ASL skills. This also will further promote an increase of integrative motivation. Socializing within the Deaf community will lead to friendship and an opportunity to work within this community. This socialization process will involve inviting Deaf people into the classroom, observing proper social norms and behaviors, and later interacting with members of the Deaf community outside of the classroom. This process into socialization into the Deaf community will be discussed in detail later in the Willingness to Communicate section.

### Instrumental Motivation

Next to integrative motivation, instrumental motivation is the other most studied and most significant factor in L2 motivation (Csizer & Dornyei, 2005). L2 achievement was found to be positively correlated to instrumental motivation in data collected from Masgoret and Gardner (2002). Instrumental motivation is defined as the interest in potential gains through L2 learning: promotion, prestige, knowledge, salary increases and bonuses (Dornyei, 1994).

Instrumental motivation was found as a supporting motivational factor in the NTID studies (Lang et al., 1996a & 1996b). Participants hoped to gain acknowledgment and advancement within NTID; in addition, participants felt pressure to fulfill NTID requirements and be able to handle themselves in L2 communication situations. Being immersed in the Deaf community at NTID, faculty members participating in the 2004 study allude to instrumental motivation as a secondary motivation in their responses (MacLeod et al., 2004). Examples of instrumental motivation included in participants' responses include improving communication skills, securing tenure, and receiving promotions. Improving communication skills is a common theme in this study as participants believed that effective communication skills were positively associated with teaching skills.

Clement, Dornyei, and Noels (1994) found similar results. They investigated motivation and group cohesion in 301 third year English L2 students throughout 11 schools in Budapest. Instrumental motivation, as defined in their study, (the "pragmatic gains" related to L2 learning) again proved to be an important motivational factor (Clement et al., 1994, p. 419). More results from this study will be considered a little later

in this paper.

In Quebec City, Belmechri and Hummel (1998) set out to uncover students' orientations and predict their motivations for learning English as their L2. It was determined that the instrumental factors of school, travel, and career, were the three most important variables for student motivation. Ninety three ESL juniors participated in this study; hence, the sample is partially representative.

Healthy competitive interactions and future career intentions (instrumental motivation) contributed to L2 motivation for a group of Japanese students in Da Silva and McInerney's (2005) investigation into the Personal Investment theory. Japanese University students learning English as a foreign language were tracked in order to find meaning in the contextual situations for learning language. Students in this study ventured to learn English as a foreign language in order to pursue career opportunities, such as teaching, flight attending, and travel coordination. Participants craved the ability to communicate in English with others in Japan or abroad.

Specific to the McKee and McKee (1992) ASL study, instrumental motivation is addressed through members of the target L2 community's perspective. Comments from Deaf ASL teachers mention hearing students' professional goals. Learning ASL is a step in the process of attaining a variety of careers requiring the use of sign: interpreting, teaching, and counseling. Students often receive training in each of the previously mentioned careers, while learning ASL.

#### Instrumental Motivation in Learning ASL

The research mentioned above supports the premise that instrumental motivation is the other most studied and most important factor in L2 motivation and learning.

Instrumental motivation is a blanket term for the practical incentives associated with L2 learning. Incentives for learning ASL can range from the grades and credits earned in class to future career opportunities and/or promotions.

L2 learners exposed to ASL and Deaf culture may experience an increase in motivation to pursue a career which can incorporate both the target language and culture. For example careers involving using ASL include, but are not limited to, interpreting, note taking, C-print captioning, teaching Deaf and hard-of-hearing students, teaching ASL, counseling, and becoming a signing skills coach. Professionals working in these fields along with Deaf professionals in the community can be invited into the ASL classroom to increase exposure. In addition, when appropriate, ASL students can also go out and observe these professionals while at work.

#### Relationships between L2 Variables

Variables for L2 motivation and learning are viewed to be co-existing and in a working relationship to each other (Gardner et al., 1997; Belmechri & Hummel, 1998). There is a perceived overlap; variables are not viewed as totally separate. For example, over the years motivational models consisting primarily of integrative and instrumental motivation have been re-evaluated and expanded.

Csizer and Dornyei (2005) in their study of middle school Hungarian L2 students in 1993 and 1999 set out to evaluate a motivational model of L2 motivation and learning. They proposed to re-interpret the definition of integrative motivation as they found it to overlap with instrumental motivation (2005). One area where these definitions overlap concerns an L2 students' struggle to become their ideal and/or ought self: the person they want and/or think they should be respectfully. Part of the search for this ideal self is



found in the L2 students' attempt to master the target language. Members of a target L2 community are viewed as native users and mastery comparable to native skill is what most L2 learners strive to achieve. Therefore, Csizer and Dornyei (2005) view native L2 skill as a parallel to this ideal or ought self. Furthermore, they explain this drive as an instrumental factor (the ideal or ought self) which overlaps and complements the integrative factor (the desire to belong and literally integrative into the target community). Limitations in the Csizer and Dornyei (2005) study were reported. They are: 1) the single age range of the participants (13-14 years old), 2) the inclusion of only general motivational factors, and 3) the use of self-reported measures.

Instrumental motivation is not the only L2 motivational factor tied to integrative motivation; research indicates friendship is tied to integrative motivation as well.

Friendship has proven to be a strong factor connected to students' aspiration to learn English (Belmechri & Hummel, 1998). In their study, Belmechri and Hummel (1998) report students' comments included desires to feel more at ease with English speaking people. Since there was a lack of intent to become members of the English speaking community, the researchers hesitated to refer to this exclusively as an integrative motivation. Thus, the category of friendship was formed as a new variable associated to integrative motivation (1998).

Friendship also appeared as a factor in Clement, Dornyei, and Noels' (1994) research, mentioned above, in Budapest of English L2 students. Questionnaires were distributed to L2 students as well as the L2 teachers during their English class and later analyzed and categorized. Within the results of the study, learning English in an effort to make friends with native and other L2 English speakers was equated to a significant

variable towards L2 learning motivation (Clement et al., 1994). Similar to the Belmechri and Hummel (1998) study, the participants in this study viewed friendship as a strong motivational factor. However, the authors chose not to label this specifically integrative motivation since there was a lack of English speakers in the immediate environment; instead, they chose to label this factor as friendship associated to integrative motivation through travel (Clement et al., 1994).

Found within the halls of a French-English bilingual university, French L2 students responded to the researchers' questionnaire regarding students' orientations and motivations. Friendship was shown to be positively and highly correlated to intrinsic motivation (Noels et al., 1999).

#### Relationships between L2 Variables in Learning ASL

In learning ASL, integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, and friendship are the three most interacting factors that work very well in learning ASL. Through immersion, making friends and contacts at Deaf events and activities, ASL students will increase their motivation and their skill level. This can, in turn, promote ASL students to search for career opportunities in the Deaf community. The argument is, once again, valid on the significance of these three factors working together.

#### Group Dynamic and Shared Goals

The importance of befriending other L2 learners as well as target language speakers aligns with people's need to identify and feel a sense of belonging. This process often begins in the L2 classroom (the group dynamic). A strong group dynamic is positively correlated with comfortable, supportive, and successful classroom

environments (Clement et al., 1994). Therefore, a strong group dynamic is positively correlated with motivation and successful L2 learning (1994).

A strong group dynamic often begins and is maintained through shared goals. Goals support motivation, especially for continuing long term goals such as language learning (Noels et al., 1999; Dornyei, 1994). Goals are deemed the leading influence in students' selection of L2 learning strategies (Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Shared or group goals defined by Dornyei (1994) as a combination of individual goals, an agreed upon end desire of the majority. This cohesion provides for positive peer pressure: pressure to stay within the present path toward attaining the shared goal and pressure to add to group success. Goal-setting theory offers achievement to be strongly associated with predetermined goals (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Working to establish goals, one should remember that goals need to be specific, challenging, and feasible, mutually agreed upon, and be supported by constructive feedback. Setting up feasible goals allows students to develop self confidence; the idea of self confidence will be considered later in this review (Dornyei, 1994).

Tremblay and Gardner (1995) in their attempt to expand upon existing L2 motivation models surveyed 75 French L2 students with a questionnaire. Though the researchers state no one model is fully accurate or agreed upon, findings in their study suggest that specific goals which are known and revisited lead to an increase in motivation.

#### Shared Goals in Learning ASL

Group dynamics and shared goals are other important factors in L2 motivation which can be developed in the ASL classroom. Establishing a strong group dynamic and

setting clear, specific, and attainable shared goals will improve the classroom environment, foster self-confidence, and increase motivation in an ASL classroom.

ASL students can be allowed to create and agree on long term goals as well as specific short term goals. For instance, long term goals of immersing with and/or working among the Deaf community can be supported through short term goals of learning vocabulary, grammar, and cultural aspects of ASL. Additionally, other short term goals of interacting with Deaf visitors in the ASL classroom and attending Deaf events can further support the long term goals of immersion. After establishing long and short term goals, students can apply positive peer pressure to each other and provide constructive feedback to support one another.

#### Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation

Another theme in L2 motivation research is the students' attitudes toward the learning situation. The learning situation is defined as the contextual factors of the class, for instance, student learning strategies and interactions with the target L2 community, and the instructional strategies utilized in class (Gardner et al., 1997). These factors are known to affect L2 motivation (Dornyei, 1994; Masgoret & Gardner, 2002). Each of these factors will be discussed then applied to ASL learning.

#### Learning Strategies

One factor influencing the learning situation, student learning strategies, include but are not limited to active participation in formal education settings, seeking out informal educational experiences and opportunities, and working outside the classroom on developing target language skills (Macleod, 2002). Learning strategies addressed in this paper include: the willingness to communicate, language anxiety, and autonomy.

### Willingness to Communicate

Active participation, a student learning strategy, in and out of the L2 classroom involves the willingness to communicate (WTC). Given an L2 communication context, the WTC is defined as the students' willingness to participate in the communication exchange (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). WTC can "improve communicative skills for which one needs to use language;" therefore, WTC is found to be positively correlated with motivation (Yashima et al., 2004, p. 122).

Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) in their two investigations of WTC and L2 learning, studied Japanese L2 students learning English. Their first study consisted of 166 high school L2 students, and the second consisted of 57 students embarking on a year-long immersion program within the US (Yashima et al., 2004). For both investigations, questionnaires were given to the students: for the first study, a questionnaire regarding motivational measures; for the second study, a questionnaire was given before the students departed for the US and again after completion of a 3 week intensive language course in the US (Yashima et al., 2004).

Investigating WTC in these two contexts showed self-confidence and perceived competence to be positively connected to WTC (Yashima et al., 2004). A higher level of WTC leads to more comfort in and satisfaction of the L2 learning experience; this, in turn, maintained and/or increased motivation. These findings held true for both inside as well as outside of the L2 classroom (Yashima et al., 2004).

Similar to the afore mentioned Japanese studies, Csizer and Dornyei (2005) in their study of Hungarian L2 students found self-confidence to be a vital factor in the

willingness to seek and engage in L2 communication experiences. Here again, self-confidence is linked to WTC, which in turn, is linked to increasing L2 motivation.

In another WTC research study, MacIntyre and his associates investigated the effects of gender and age on WTC, perceived competence, anxiety, and L2 motivation junior high L2 students in Nova Scotia (MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan, 2002). As students matured and advanced to the next grade level, WTC and perceived competence increased overall (but significantly only between grades 7 and 8). Perceived competence holds the strongest correlation to L2 and WTC.

Faculty members at NTID expressed their opinions concerning what important characteristics and learning strategies are necessary to successfully learn ASL (MacLeod et al., 2004). From their responses, the participants cited a willingness to interact and converse with ASL users to be a vital strategy in learning ASL. Participants agreed their "immersion" and their continuous ability to practice using ASL with members of the NTID community were critical to learning the language (MacLeod et al., 2004, p. 12).

#### Willingness to Communicate in Learning ASL

The willingness to seek out and participate in communication interactions is perceived as an important factor in L2 learning. In regards to ASL, WTC involves interacting and immersing with the Deaf Community. To properly develop and support WTC socialization must take place; however, this is a process. Developing students' WTC can begin, in ASL I, by inviting Deaf individuals into the classroom in order to speak and interact with students. Inviting Deaf individuals into this safe environment and allowing students to ask questions and experience one-on-one interactions is the first step in this process. Later, in ASL II, students can continue to increase their WTC via visiting

Deaf clubs and attending Deaf events. Here students can observe the happenings, interactions, and social norms of the Deaf community. Continuing in this process, ASL III students can continue attending Deaf events; however, now their skills should be at a level where they can hold one-on-one and/or group conversations. Now at this level, students can begin to participate and interact among ASL users at these events. This real world experience and practice can lead to increased comfort and self confidence; this in turn can lead to further increase the WTC and an increase in motivation.

### Language Anxiety

Hindering on the WTC is language anxiety inside and outside of the L2 classroom. Language anxiety refers to L2 communication apprehension which can interfere with the L2 learning process (MacIntyre et al., 2002). This interference can range from a decrease in motivation, a decrease in self-confidence, a decrease in perceived L2 competence, up to and including a fear of future of L2 communication situations. Language anxiety proved to have a negative correlation with motivation; the participants in the study equated their self-confidence in the L2 to their motivation (MacIntyre et al., 2002).

Researchers, Clement, Dornyei, and Noels (1994), also found anxiety to negatively affect student engagement in L2 communicative situations. Learning activities promoting negative peer and teacher evaluations tend to increase language anxiety and lower perceived L2 competence. Outside the L2 classroom, students with low levels of language anxiety are more likely to pursue contact with L2 community members.

Gardner, Tremblay, and Masgoret (1997) viewed language anxiety as a collective in their investigation of individual differences in second language acquisition. One

hundred and two French L2 university students were sampled and results found language anxiety to be comprised of self-confidence measures. Results demonstrated that motivation is connected and affected by self-confidence. High levels of L2 self-confidence resulted in a much stronger motivation to continue studying and working in using the target language.

Gardner investigated anxiety further in his 1996-97 study; anxiety was another target variable measured throughout the span of a one-year language course (Gardner et al., 2004). Generally anxiety levels lowered as the course progressed. Participants in this study ultimately were categorized by grades; expectedly, the A and B students expressed lower levels of anxiety than those of students earning lower than B grades. Helping students succeed, even in small increments, builds confidence, reduces anxiety, and increases motivation. A series of small successes tends to snowball into significant success.

Self-confidence, WTC, and anxiety again are addressed in the McKee & McKee (1992) research study. Throughout students' comments, a common theme proved to be a lack of self-confidence in L2 skills resulting in negative interactions with members of the L2 community. Anxiety in L2 communication interactions increased as students' experienced frustration with their interlocutor's code-switching. Code-switching refers to a natural tendency for Deaf people to switch to a more English based sign while interacting among hearing people to facilitate communication. Reports in this study also show Deaf people will code switch to practice their English skills among hearing people. Concerns of the participants in the NTID (Lang et al., 1996b) study mirrored those of the participants in McKee and McKee's (1992) study. Participants in the NTID study shared



concerns about Deaf colleagues mocking their skill levels, for example, by automatically code switching without assessing their changing skill levels (Lang et al., 1996b).

### Language Anxiety in Learning ASL

Language anxiety decreases motivation and leaves the L2 learner fearful of future communication interactions with members of the target community. ASL students may perceive communication interactions with the Deaf community as a risk for facing potential correction and/or rejection. Therefore, language anxiety can cause students to avoid Deaf events or pass up the opportunity to socialize during these events (i.e. standing quietly in the corner with other L2 students).

Reducing language anxiety begins in the ASL I classroom, here, the concept of a positive attitude can be addressed. Attitude in the Deaf community is essential: ASL learners are more accepted based on their attitude than their language competence. ASL instructors can help to reduce students' anxiety, early on, by leading class discussions about how to interact with Deaf people. Also, videos and/or DVDs demonstrating appropriate social behaviors and social interactions can be shown. An example of such a DVD is, *A Sign of Respect: Strategies for Effective Deaf/Hearing Interactions* ([www.treehousevideo.com](http://www.treehousevideo.com)). Plus, a new DVD created by Thomas Holcomb is due out for release next year. Furthermore, the ASL instructor can invite Deaf people into the classroom to interact with the students in a safe and structured environment.

From there, ASL instructors can help to reduce anxiety by attending Deaf events with their students and/or encouraging students to attend in groups. When students are ready to begin interacting, ASL instructors can help introduce their students to different people at these events.

### Autonomy

Anxiety is believed to be lowered in an L2 classroom environment that promotes autonomy; in addition, students are less likely to discontinue their L2 studies after participating in classrooms that support autonomy (Noels et al., 1999). These classrooms often provide choices to students: choices for group goals, priorities, activities, projects, and dead-lines (Dornyei, 1994). Autonomy maintains and improves student self-determination and intrinsic motivation (Noels, 2001). Self-determination implies the sense that an activity is undertaken due to the positive feelings associated with the task (Noels et al., 1999).

Seventy-eight students enrolled in a 6-week French immersion program in Canada were surveyed with a three-section questionnaire revolving around teachers' communicative styles (Noels et al., 1999). Data was collected from students in order to reveal their perspectives (teachers were not questioned or observed in this study). Specifically, attention in the students' survey was devoted to teacher support of student autonomy; feelings of anxiety were correlated with a loss of motivation and lower levels of perceived L2 confidence. Results supported the benefits of autonomy in the classroom. Students feeling engaged and active in the learning process felt lower anxiety, and heightened feelings of motivation, perceived L2 competence, and comfort and satisfaction (Noels et al., 1999). Noels, in another study, (2001) investigated students' perceptions of their Spanish L2 learning experiences. The outcome of this study demonstrated feelings of autonomy caused students to feel more actively involved in the learning process, as well as, more competent in their L2 learning (Noels, 2001).

### Autonomy in Learning ASL

The literature provided above supports that autonomy combats language anxiety and can lead to an increase in motivation. Classrooms which support autonomy provide students with choices. Therefore, an ASL instructor should provide students with opportunities to assume responsibility in the classroom and become active in their own learning.

Students should be allowed and encouraged to provide feedback regarding instructional strategies and materials. For example, students should be able to offer feedback pertaining to their student work books, cultural and historical articles used for class discussions, internet sites, and DVDs/videos. Additionally, students can contribute ideas for review activities and/or games to complement teacher materials and lesson plans.

As for ASL instructors, they need to provide activities which allow them to observe students using the target L2 and provide immediate and corrective feedback (this helps students to develop autonomy and self monitoring skills). The ASL instructor should also be a facilitator in the classroom and be open to students' ideas, comments, and insights.

### Instructional Strategies

Motivation and L2 research indicates that both learning and instructional strategies should be implemented in the classroom in order to create a safe and motivational environment.

Instructional strategies are utilized by the L2 teacher who is an important variable in the L2 classroom and L2 learning process (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). The L2 teacher

sets the tone for the class; therefore, the instructional strategies he/she may choose should support their belief that L2 learning is likely and plausible. Thus, what are the types of instructional strategies L2 teachers should utilize to foster motivation?

In 1976 Gertrude Moskowitz set out to discover what made a foreign language teacher outstanding as opposed to merely good. Within the introduction to her study she points out, "in the end it's the teacher who makes the difference. Good teachers seem to know how to make students like learning a foreign language and want to continue this study" (Moskowitz, 1976, p. 135). Moskowitz surveyed students' perceptions of their teachers to identify teachers marked as "outstanding" and teachers marked as "typical." After the surveys were completed, participating typical and outstanding teachers were observed in their classrooms with the intent to identify and compare their behaviors and strategies utilized.

This study categorized teachers through their use of direct and indirect behaviors. Direct refers to teacher centered behaviors which limit students' active participation; in contrast to this are indirect behaviors which support and encourage the active participation of the students in the classroom (Moskowitz, 1976). Overall, the outstanding teachers used more indirect instructional behaviors and strategies. Within the classrooms of the outstanding teachers, laughter and smiles were common. In addition, these teachers incorporated students' ideas into the classroom and worked more with free choice. These variables utilized by outstanding teachers include:

- A) More total use of the foreign language by the teacher and students combined;
- B) More teacher talk in foreign language;
- C) More student talk in foreign language;

- D) Less student talk which is off the task;
- E) More indirect behaviors in the total lesson;
- F) More indirect behaviors in the foreign language;
- G) More nonverbal indirect behaviors;
- H) More use of praise and joking;
- I) More use of personalized questions; and
- J) More nonverbal information (i.e. gesturing to convey meaning) (Moskowitz, 1976, p. 146).

Oxford and Shearin (1994) summarized instructional steps teachers should undertake in their L2 classrooms: identify students' motivations and formulate students' beliefs regarding L2 learning achievement. Teachers ought to adapt by accepting classroom diversity (differences in learning styles) and striving to establish a positive learning environment. L2 teachers are also encouraged to offer real world L2 communication situations and experiences. Assisting students' in their development of internal motivation is another step in which L2 teachers should strive. Dornyei (1994) complement this work with additional ideas for L2 teachers: modeling the behavior for the desired group environment, goals, and motivation. Moreover, teachers should make activity purposes known to the students so they can see the value in their class work and effort. Finally, feedback should be provided to students so they can monitor their own learning and make timely and necessary corrections (Dornyei, 1994). Additional L2 motivational strategies included from Dornyei are:

1. Include a sociocultural component in the L2 syllabus;
2. Develop learners' cross-cultural awareness systematically;

3. Promote student contact with L2 speakers;
4. Develop learners' instrumental motivation;
5. Develop students' self-confidence;
6. Promote the students' self-efficacy with regard to achieving learning goals;
7. Promote favorable self-perceptions of competence in L2;
8. Decrease student anxiety;
9. Promote motivation-enhancing attributions;
10. Encourage student to set attainable subgoals;
11. Make the syllabus of the course relevant;
12. Increase the attractiveness of the course content;
13. Discuss with students the choice of teaching materials;
14. Arouse and sustain curiosity and attention;
15. Increase students' interest and involvement with tasks;
16. Match difficulty of tasks with students' abilities;
17. Increase student expectancy of task fulfillment;
18. Facilitate student satisfaction;
19. Try to be empathic, congruent, and accepting;
20. Adopt the role of facilitator;
21. Promote learner autonomy;
22. Model structure interest in L2 learning;
23. Introduce tasks in such a way as to stimulate intrinsic motivation...;
24. Use motivating feedback;
25. Increase group's goal-orientedness;

26. Promote internalization of classroom norms;
27. Help maintain internalized classroom norms;
28. Minimize detrimental effect of evaluation on intrinsic motivation;
29. Promote the development of group cohesion and enhance intermember relations;
30. Use cooperative learning techniques (Dornyei, 1994, p. 281-282).

Other suggestions come from students who, in a recent study on motivation, were asked to share their feelings and desires as to what they want to see transpire in the classroom and what they want from their own teachers. Four students labeled reluctant learners (students who chose not to actively participate in school though they possess the ability to succeed) were interviewed and observed with the intent to gain insight into their educational experience (Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005). Upon studying the information given in the interviews, teachers were found to be the most important variables that can support or diminish students' active participation in the classroom.

Common themes were found from the comments of each student: interest, value, feedback, talent, teacher-student relationships, and relationships between the educational team members (Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005).

Keeping students motivated and engaged in learning begins with student interest. Students are more likely to actively participate in activities in which they show talent (Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005). Balance, however, must be struck within learning activities: students need to be challenged without being overwhelmed or left helpless. Students must be interested and able to see and understand the immediate and future value in a subject or activity in order to be and stay engaged. Teacher derived learning

activities offer the opportunity for teachers to informally assess student development and mastery. Capitalizing on the time used for activities, teachers can offer immediate feedback to students. Students reported the importance of teacher feedback; feedback should be honest, constructive, and should support autonomy.

Related to the studies afore mentioned regarding autonomy, students' comments in the Daniels and Arapostathis (2005) investigation included perceptions of their teachers. The belief that teachers were partners in the learning process, as opposed to tyrants, increased their motivation and fostered trusting relationships within the classroom. Through a partnership, students felt that they were seen as individuals able to contribute to the class. The participants expressed appreciation for teachers whose goal is to support their success. The data from the interviews show a common thread which centers on the correspondence between the quality of teaching and motivation. Once the teachers provide the best quality of instruction, the motivation among the students will be increased and sustained. Besides this, there is one more quality to be considered and it is: teachers should be flexible, empathic, caring, encouraging, and supportive.

#### Instructional Strategies in Learning ASL

The findings cited above layout different instructional strategies proven to support student autonomy and increase motivation. Included in these instructional strategies are: primary use of the target L2, indirect methods of instruction, inclusion of student input, development of self confidence, established goals, an outline of activities' purpose, providing feedback, and establishing a teacher and student partnership. ASL is an L2 taught in the classroom, therefore, the instructional strategies cited above can be tailored and utilized for ASL instruction.



### Conclusion

Investigation into motivation and L2 learning has revealed a few significant factors: integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, group dynamics and shared goals, and attitudes toward the L2 learning situation. Therefore, these factors are important in ASL learning as well. The goal for this paper is to address and demonstrate the application of these factors into ASL learning.

Integrative motivation is the fundamental factor in L2 motivation. This includes the desire to interact and assimilate into the target culture. Integrative motivation can be fostered and upheld by interacting with Deaf people in the community. Interaction can begin in the ASL classroom and overtime broaden out into the community through social events. Through this socialization, motivation and ASL skills both will be enhanced.

Instrumental motivation is the other leading factor in L2 motivation. This is defined as the potential incentives involved with learning an L2. Incentives may include grades and/or credits earned from classes. Furthermore, future career opportunities and professional advancement involving the use of ASL are the possible incentives as well.

Group dynamics and shared goals are other factors that have been found to increase and sustain motivation. Shared goals (both long term goals and specific short term goals) can be agreed upon by the students and pursued in the ASL classroom. Short term goals of interacting with Deaf people in the classroom and attending Deaf events in the community can be supported. Long range goals, such as socializing at these Deaf events and later fully immersing into the Deaf community, can also be supported in the ASL classroom. Shared goals help to build a strong and supportive environment where students can work together to increase both their motivation and their ASL skills.

Attitudes toward the L2 learning situation (the willingness to communicate, language anxiety, autonomy, and instructional strategies) can increase and preserve motivation. WTC can be increased while language anxiety is reduced through the interactions between students and guests in the ASL classroom. Creating a safe environment for students to interact with a Deaf person, who is aware that they are just beginning to learn ASL, can boost students' self esteem, motivation, and ASL skills. Later, through observing the interactions at Deaf events and in time participating and interacting at these events, students again can increase their own WTC while at the same time lowering their language anxiety.

Autonomy also helps to lower language anxiety and develop motivation. Choices can be offered to ASL students in order to give them responsibility for their own learning. For instance, students can provide input for the use for daily materials such as work books and DVDs/videos. Plus, ASL students can contribute ideas for games and activities to run in their own classroom.

Instructional strategies found to improve motivation in the L2 classroom have been devised. These strategies incorporate: the primary use of the target language, indirect methods of instruction, use of student input, established goals, and building a teacher and student partnership. All of these strategies can be utilized in the ASL classroom.

Even though based on common sense and experience, the themes in this paper were applied to ASL learning. In the future, it would be nice if the application of the themes to ASL learning could be "scientifically" confirmed. Continuing research into ASL learning and L2 motivation may result in confirming and/or reconfirming these

theories and applications; however, this may also result in the development of even more specific teaching and learning strategies that are tailored to ASL and can be incorporated into the classroom.

In this day and age, learning has become a life-long process; therefore, as educators it is worth our time and energy to comprehend the underlying works of motivation. As a result of gaining understanding, teachers can better support students by increasing and maintaining motivation. Overall, motivation acts as the energy that draws individuals into doing something: it influences the time that is spent in both desirable and challenging endeavors. To conclude this paper, J. Marriott Jr. (in Khurana's *Motivation: A select collection of motivation*) (2007) aptly says it all: "Motivate them, train them, care about them, and make winners out of them" (para. 1).

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